



September 27, 2011

Dear Senate Committee on Transportation:

Gift of Life Michigan supports Senator John Gleason's effort to increase donation and donor awareness in Michigan by establishing a Donate Life license plate (Senate Bill 534).

In partnership with the Secretary of State, our organization is bringing the Michigan Donor Registry up to the national average. We can accomplish this through efforts at the main place people can join the registry – Secretary of State branch offices – and also by spreading the message about the positive benefits of choosing to donate life. This license plate will help accomplish this goal.

The Donate Life license plate has multiple financial sponsors, primarily Gift of Life Michigan, in conjunction with the Michigan Eye-Bank, the Michigan Donor Family Council, The Lisa Biskup Organ, Eye, Tissue Donor Foundation, Donate Life Coalition of Michigan, Gift of Life Minority Organ Tissue Transplant Education Foundation (MOTTEP)-Detroit, and two transplant centers, The Henry Ford Transplant Institute and The University of Michigan Transplant Center. These organizations are committed to seeing the license plate succeed.

We are especially supportive of the tie-barred bill for this license plate (House Bill 4978), which would create an Organ and Tissue Donation Education Fund in the Department of State, permitting monies to go directly to promotional campaigns at the branch offices, on the website and throughout the state. It is this spirit of private-public partnerships that makes the license plate work as a two-fold public awareness effort – first, through the visibility of the license plate and second, through the promotional funds that would be generated by the plate.

According to a survey performed by Donate Life America in 2010, 26 states have a donor awareness license plate. With initiatives such as the Donate Life license plate, Michigan begins to position itself as above average in donation promotion and unique in establishing funding opportunities to assist government organizations in fulfilling their mandated objectives. This effort will provide hope to the 3,000 people in our state awaiting a life-saving organ transplant and the many more who will benefit from tissue and corneal transplants. We ask for your help in making this initiative a reality.

Sincerely,

Richard E. Pietroski
Gift of Life Michigan Chief Executive Officer

Questions: Please contact Amy Olszewski aolszewski@giftoflifemichigan.org 800.482.4881 x1014

Gift of Life Michigan is the state's federally designated organ and tissue recovery organization, which acts as intermediary between donors, their families and hospital staff. Gift of Life Michigan, in collaboration with the Michigan Eye-Bank, provides all services necessary for organ, tissue and eye donation. For more information, or to join the Donor Registry, visit www.giftoflifemichigan.org.